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# Food Safety Educator

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## The President's Food Safety Council: Envisioning Change

Understanding where we've been is an important part of knowing where we are today-- and where we are going.

Feature articles in this issue of *The Food Safety Educator* provide a look back to food production at the turn of the century and a look forward to food safety systems of the future.

The articles are drawn from testimony presented before Congress in August 1999 by Catherine Woteki, Under Secretary for Food Safety for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Jane Henney, Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, on behalf of the President's Council on Food Safety.

Through their testimony, Woteki and Henney outlined the beginnings of our country's food safety systems. They summarized why today's food safety challenges are different than yesterday's. And they laid out a framework for change and a vision for the future.

That vision is being charted today by the President's Council on Food Safety.

The Council was established in August 1998 and directed to coordinate food safety in this country.

Federal agencies involved include the Food Safety and Inspection Service, under the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, under the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Environmental Protection Agency.

For the first time, federal agencies with different and overlapping areas of responsibility have been directed to:

- Coordinate a strategic food safety plan for the country
- Develop coordinated food safety budgets
- Establish research priorities.

To develop the strategic plan, food safety officials have worked together over the past 6 months delineating core goals--one of which includes education and training.

The Council will present the draft strategic plan during a public meeting in January 2000 and solicit public comment. The plan will then be finalized and submitted in July 2000.

The articles in this issue provide many snapshots of the nation's food safety systems--their composite image is one of change.

Public comment on the President's Council's strategic plan can help shape the changes to come.

For updates on the strategic plan and how to submit comments--or to read the original testimony--go to [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov). Click on "President's Council," and go to "Administration Statement on Behalf of the President's Council on Food Safety." ●

### Did you Know?

• A foodborne illness outbreak refers to an incident in which two or more people experience the same illness after eating the same food.

• Incidence of foodborne illness refers to the number of new cases of foodborne illness in a given population during a specified period of time--for instance, the number of new cases each year per 100,000 people.

Want to learn more?  
Subscribe to EdNet, the federal electronic newsletter for food safety educators. Email to: [Listserv@foodsafety.gov](mailto:Listserv@foodsafety.gov)

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# The Food Safety Challenge

Congressional Testimony: Excerpts

“Today’s challenges with respect to the food supply are complex. Much has changed in what we eat and where we eat.

“Americans are eating a greater variety of foods, particularly poultry, seafood and fresh fruit and vegetables. This is beneficial to our health, but presents greater food safety challenges.

“More consumers demand these foods year round, making safety issues surrounding transportation and refrigeration increasingly important. And as international trade expands, shifting regional commerce and products to a global marketplace, our role in ensuring the safety of food expands as well.

“Americans are eating more of their meals away from home. In fact, fifty cents of every food dollar is spent on food prepared outside the home. This food is purchased not only from grocery stores and restaurants, but also is consumed in

We are aware of more than five times the number of foodborne pathogens in 1999 than we were in 1942.

institutional settings such as schools, hospitals, nursing homes and day care centers. The result is that, as more people become involved in preparing our meals, the chance for disease-producing errors increases.

“Our vulnerable population will be growing, with increased longevity and increasing numbers of immune-compromised individuals. Now nearly a quarter of the population is at higher risk for foodborne illness.

“These are all important factors—different foods, more foods prepared outside the home, and increased vulnerable populations—but perhaps

the most important elements in our changing world are the recognition that foodborne diseases are a substantial contributor to ill health, that these diseases are largely preventable, and that new and more virulent foodborne pathogens continue to emerge.

“We are aware of more than five times the number of foodborne pathogens in 1999 than we were in 1942. Many of these pathogens can be deadly, especially for people at highest risk. As the system of food production and distribution changes, we must be sure that the food safety system changes with it. There are many difficult challenges to preventing foodborne illnesses. To meet them, we need a strong science base that addresses all the complex issues involved in continuing to improve food safety and public health.” ●

# Origins of the Federal Food Safety System

Congressional Testimony: Excerpts

“Until the first decade of the 20th century, the regulation of food safety was primarily the responsibility of state and local officials.

“The Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act were both passed by Congress in 1906, establishing the federal framework, which has survived to this day. From their inception, these laws focused on different areas of the food supply, and they took different approaches to ensure food safety.

“The Meat Inspection Act emerged in 1906, as a result of Congressional acknowledgment of risk after publication of Upton Sinclair’s book *The Jungle*, which focused public attention on filthy conditions in Chicago’s meatpacking plants. Infectious agents were the leading cause of human morbidity and mortality in this country, and the links between some animal diseases and human diseases, what we would now

call zoonotic diseases, were known. This Act and its successors required continuous inspection, including ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection, to identify animal diseases, and prevent contamination during slaughter.

“It also created an inspection force which continues to this day as the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

# The Food Safety Team

Congressional Testimony: Excerpts

"Over the years FSIS was also given authority to oversee poultry and egg products via the Poultry Products Inspection Act and the Egg Products Inspection Act.

"Starting in 1967, the Acts provided for a shared funding and cooperative agreement system permitting states to operate meat and poultry inspection programs. Twenty-five states have their own programs as of today.

"The genesis of the original Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 began with debates around substitute foods, such as margarine for butter, and the use of questionable 'ingredients' or additives in foods, such as coal tar, borax, and colors.

"Thus, the Pure Food and Drug Act, as originally enacted, forbade adulteration and misbranding of foods in interstate commerce, placing the initial responsibility on the food industry to produce safe and wholesome food, with the government, in effect, policing the industry.

"In addition to authority under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (formerly the Pure Food and Drug Act), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has authority under the Public Health Service Act, which gives FDA two valuable additional tools: very broad authority to adopt regulations to control the spread of communicable disease when food is involved, and the ability to provide assistance to, and accept assistance from, our state and local counterparts in the regulation of communicable disease." •

Federal agencies work to prevent foodborne illness and food hazards in partnership with state, local, and foreign governments as well as academia and the private sector.

"Despite split jurisdictions and differing statutory responsibilities across several federal agencies, the Administration has adopted a farm-to-table approach that looks at food safety as an integrated and interdependent system.

"Under the current structure, two federal agencies have primary statutory responsibility for assuring the safety of our food supply.... FSIS has regulatory and inspection responsibility for meat, poultry, and egg products, and FDA has regulatory responsibility over the remainder of the food supply.

"FDA has jurisdiction over 78 percent of domestic and imported foods that are marketed in interstate commerce. FDA seeks to ensure that these products are safe, sanitary, nutritious, wholesome, and adequately labeled.

"FDA has jurisdiction where food (other than meat, poultry, and egg products) is produced, processed, packaged, stored, or sold.

"FDA's jurisdiction includes much more than food processing plants; it also includes approval and surveillance for new animal drugs, medicated feed, and all food additives (including coloring agents, preservatives, food packaging, sanitizers and boiler water additives) that can become part of food.

"FDA shares with FSIS responsibilities for egg safety. FDA has authority for shell eggs and FSIS has authority for egg products.

"FSIS is charged by statute to prevent the shipment of adulterated meat products to consumers, and to oversee appropriate labeling and provision of other consumer information. FSIS also has authority to oversee poultry and egg products, via the Poultry Products Inspection Act and the Egg Products Inspection Act. The Acts also require any country wishing to ship meat, poultry or egg products to the U.S. to maintain an inspection program that is equivalent to the U.S. inspection program. FSIS inspects each meat and poultry food animal, both before and after slaughter.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in DHHS, plays a critical and unique role as a disease monitoring, investigative, and advisory agency that is separate from--but works closely with--both food regulatory agencies. CDC leads federal efforts to gather data on foodborne illness and investigate outbreaks, and monitors the effectiveness of prevention and control efforts. Through its on-going public health efforts, CDC also plays a pivotal role in building state and local health department epidemiology and laboratory capacity to support foodborne disease and surveillance and outbreak response.

"The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), another important partner, protects our water supply by setting drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. It also regulates pesticide products used in this country and establishes tolerances or maximum limits for pesticide residues allowed on imported and domestic food commodities and animal feed." •

# Food Safety Accomplishments

Congressional Testimony: Excerpts

In their testimony, Woteki and Henney pointed out that “food safety has been a high priority for the Administration since it took office.”

The Administration’s May 1997 report “Food Safety From Farm to Table: A National Food Safety Initiative” contained recommendations that “were comprehensive and ambitious and led to a needed shift in attention and resources toward the growing problem of microbial contamination of food.”

**The recommendations included:**

- Developing and expanding an early warning system for foodborne illness
- Creating a national electronic network for bacterial “fingerprint” comparison
- Improving outbreak containment through better federal-state-local coordination
- Establishing a risk assessment consortium
- Improving pathogen detection methods
- Understanding antibiotic resistance
- Improving prevention techniques to avoid, reduce, or eliminate pathogens
- Implementing seafood, meat, and poultry HACCP
- Enhancing the safety of foods at retail
- Enhancing coverage of imported foods
- Improving consumer, retail, and food service education
- Conducting research to identify barriers to safe food handling, and
- Developing a strategic plan.

“In just 2 years, the Administration has delivered on these extensive commitments. The vast majority of the recommendations have been implemented and are already leading to important improvements in our food safety system.”

For further information on accomplishments outlined in the testimony, go to [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov) and click on “Administration Statement on Behalf of the President’s Council on Food Safety.”

## Improved Surveillance

Congressional Testimony: Excerpts

Two of the accomplishments noted the in Congressional testimony were results from improved surveillance:

“Recent results from FoodNet show a 44-percent decrease in the infection rate for *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE), a serious infection associated with poultry and eggs, from 1996 to 1998 in the areas of the country under surveillance, and a 15-percent decline in illnesses caused by *Campylobacter*, the most common bacterial foodborne pathogen in the U.S.

“Also, FoodNet data help to document the effectiveness of new food safety control measures such as USDA’s

Pathogen Reduction and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Rule as well as HACCP programs undertaken by the FDA for seafood and other food products.

“For example, some of the changes in rates of foodborne illness may reflect that FDA and FSIS prevention efforts are working.

“PulseNet, developed by CDC, enables a national network of public health laboratories to perform DNA “fingerprinting” on bacteria that may be foodborne and compare results through an electronic database maintained by CDC.

“Now a collaborative effort among HHS, USDA and several states, PulseNet permits rapid and accurate detection of foodborne illness outbreaks and traceback to their sources, including detection of disparate multi-state outbreaks that may have gone undetected.

“PulseNet has been key in rapidly detecting and controlling numerous outbreaks of foodborne illness, including multi-state outbreaks.”

# Where Do We Go From Here?

Congressional Testimony: Excerpts

Concluding their testimony, Woteki and Henney noted that "we have enhanced surveillance of foodborne disease and better coordinated our response to outbreaks.

"We have improved coordination of food safety programs, issued regulations that are science-based, and targeted important new research and risk assessment to critical scientific gaps.

"And, we have strengthened education and training, especially for those who handle food at critical points from the retail setting to the home."

At the same time, they added, "this is only the beginning. As good as the nation's food system is, there is much more to be done. As the challenges to our food safety system continue to evolve, we must adapt our system to meet these changing needs...."

"For these reasons, the President directed his Council on Food Safety to

develop a comprehensive strategic food safety plan. The plan will address the full range of food safety issues, long- and short-term, to further ensure the health and safety of the nation's food supply.

"The plan will help set priorities, improve coordination and efficiency, identify gaps in the current system and ways to fill those gaps, enhance and strengthen prevention and intervention strategies, and identify reliable measures to indicate progress.

"As part of this process, the Council will conduct a thorough assessment of the existing statutes, evaluate the degree of regulatory flexibility that currently exists and determine what improvements will require statutory changes. In addition, the Council will conduct an assessment of structural and organizational options and other mechanisms that could strengthen the federal food

safety system before recommending major legislative or administrative actions on reorganization...."

**"We firmly believe that establishing a seamless, science-based food safety system is critical to ensuring the safety of our food supply and protecting public health."**

"How we get there should be carefully thought through with all of our partners and stakeholders. We assure you that we are approaching this effort seriously and expeditiously, and are considering the full range of options available to us." ●

## Assessing Food and Food Safety: 1900-1999

An article in the October 15, 1999 issue of the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR) summarized changes in public health relating to food and food safety issues during this century.

The article notes that "during the early 20th century, contaminated food, milk and water caused many foodborne infections...."

But the picture began to change with the advent of technologies like refrigeration and pasteurization.

Legislation also was enacted requiring higher standards of sanitation and

food safety as well as milk pasteurization and regulation of pesticides.

But, "newly recognized foodborne pathogens have emerged in the United States since the late 1970's; contributing factors include changes in agricultural practices and food processing operations, and the globalization of the food supply."

Since then, initiatives like Pathogen Reduction and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points programs as well as "pathogen education campaigns" have contributed to reducing pathogens in the food supply.

"Any 21st century improvement will be accelerated by new diagnostic techniques and the rapid exchange of information through use of electronic networks and the Internet."

The article, which also summarizes nutritional changes over the century, can be accessed by going to: <http://www.cdc.gov/epo/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4840a1.htm>

You can access other MMWR articles by going to:

<http://www2.cdc.gov/mmwr/weekcvol.html> ●

# New Educational Program for Seniors

"We all love to eat! And why not? Good food, like good friends, is one of life's great joys," says the host of this new video "To Your Health! Food Safety for Seniors."

The 20-minute video and an accompanying publication provide upbeat "how-to" information in clear and concise formats.

Jointly produced by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the publication and video are due to be released early in 2000.

The educational materials:

- Explain why seniors may be more susceptible to foodborne illness
- Teach four simple steps to handling food safely at home
- Provide tips on how to "eat out" safely.

The education materials were specifically designed for seniors in terms of both design and content.

"We knew that certain ideas can present problems in terms of food safety and seniors," according to Dianne Durant, from FSIS.

"We knew we needed to help explain why safe food handling is different today than it was 50 years ago," Durant said.

As Laura Fox from FDA explained, "A lot has changed in the way food is produced and distributed. And we know more today about foodborne pathogens and the illnesses they can cause. We want seniors to understand these changes."

"While seniors do a better job than most people when it comes to handling food safely, we also know that some seniors may face increased risks of illness from pathogens in food," Fox said.



"And this is the message we wanted to convey: Why take the chance? As the saying goes, 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' "

## The Video:

The 20- minute video presents information about how to handle food safely when cooking at home, as well as food safety tips for eating out or picking up ready-to-eat meals from grocery stores or takeout.

Through a series of vignettes, viewers meet people who might be just like them: a newly widowed man, a grandmother fixing a meal for her grandson, an elderly woman eating at a senior center with a friend.

"Experts on aging stressed that it was important for information to be presented clearly, through simple strong narrative," Durant explained.

As a result, a host in the video

provides the continuing link, letting viewers see over her shoulder into these people's lives and reinforcing the food safety messages they convey.

Through the vignettes, viewers learn why food safety concerns are different today than they were in the past, why some older people face special risks and the basic rules of food safety at home and when eating out.

## The Publication:

Set in 14-point type to make reading easy for older eyes, the accompanying publication reiterates and expands on information from the video.

Topics include:

- How Times Have Changed
- Why Some People Face Special Risks
- Recognizing Foodborne Illness
- Food Safety at Home--including a

"And this is the message we wanted to convey: why take the chance? As the saying goes, 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' "

cooking temperature chart and refrigerator storage chart

- Special Foods, Special Advice, and
- Eating Out, Bringing In.

The publication's section titled "Special Foods, Special Advice" alerts older adults to some foods they are advised not to eat because of increased risk of illness from bacteria that might be present. The section also provides special guidance concerning the handling of ready-to-eat foods like hot dogs and deli-style meats.

#### Distribution Plans:

The video and publication will be distributed for free to the Administration on Aging's 800 nutrition centers. The centers serve meals to more than 3 million seniors. Nutritionists are on site to present educational programs.

"We also anticipate distributing the materials widely through cooperative extension agents and FDA consumer specialists," Fox said.

Educators will be encouraged to copy and redistribute both the video and the publication.

Check the [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov) web site in Spring 2000 for an update on the materials. ●

## "Do Seniors Face Special Risks?"

Do older people face special risks from foodborne bacteria?

"Absolutely," says Dr. Eileen Dunne with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"The reasons are very complex. Certainly, any underlying illnesses, such as diabetes or cirrhosis of the liver, will increase a person's susceptibility to bacteria. But underlying illnesses aren't the only factor.

"Some studies have shown that immune systems change as we age. And those changes can make us more likely to get sick from dangerous bacteria that can be found in food," according to Dr. Dunne.

The reasons for this, Dr. Dunne notes, "are not clearly understood."

But one recent foodborne illness outbreak dramatically illustrates the reality of increased risks.

In December 1998 a major outbreak of foodborne illness was traced to a bacteria called *Listeria monocytogenes* that had contaminated some ready-to-eat meats.

That outbreak eventually involved 22 states and 101 illnesses. Fifteen people died and there were 6 miscarriages or stillbirths.

Who became sick?

The ages of people ranged from 5 to 94 years old. But the median age was 70. ●

"Who became sick? The ages of people ranged from 5 to 94 years old. But the median age was 70."

# Egg Safety

## Reducing Illness

In 1999, the federal government proposed to improve egg safety through three new measures:

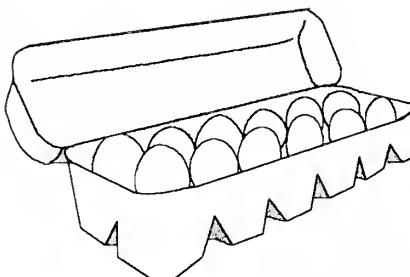
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed requiring safe handling statements on shell-egg cartons. The statement would warn consumers of the potential risk of illness caused by *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) and provide safe handling instructions. After a public comment period, this proposal will be finalized in early 2000.

- For the first time, there will be a uniform federal requirement that all eggs and egg products packed for consumers be refrigerated at 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

A proposed FDA regulation would apply the refrigeration requirement to retail establishments including supermarkets, restaurants, delis, caterers, vending operations, hospitals, nursing homes and schools. This proposal will also be finalized in early 2000.

In addition, in 1999 the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) began applying the refrigeration requirement to warehouses and other distribution locations--including transport vehicles-- that store shell eggs destined for consumers.

- The President's Council on Food Safety is developing a strategic plan to further improve the safety of eggs. The Council's goal is to reduce SE cases from eggs by



50 percent by the year 2005.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 310,000 cases of SE occur each year primarily because of food containing undercooked eggs.

It is estimated that these three new provisions could prevent up to 66,000 SE-related illnesses and 40 deaths annually.

For updated information on the status of the proposals and the strategic plan, go to: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~dms/fs-toc.html#specific>

## Good Egg Tools for Educators:

A 1998 FDA/FSIS consumer survey shows that consumers are still taking some risks when handling and eating eggs.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents said they still eat raw eggs. And 65 percent said they don't wash their hands after handling raw eggs.

To increase awareness among consumers and food handlers, both FDA and FSIS have issued new and informative fact sheets regarding eggs.

FDA's "Food Safety Facts for Consumers" is a two-page fact sheet providing concise safe handling instructions including how to "buy safe," cook and store.

FDA has also issued a fact sheet for food service titled "Assuring the Safety of Eggs and Egg Dishes

"Made From Raw, Shell Eggs" with guidance based on the FDA Food Code.

Both documents, dated August 1999, are available through: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/~dms/fs-toc.html#specific>

FSIS issued a 13-page *Food Safety Focus* piece titled "All About Shell Eggs" in August 1999.

And indeed, if you have a question about eggs, it is answered here. "All About Shell Eggs" covers everything. For instance:

Ever wondered about the history of the egg? "As animal life emerged from the water about 250 million years ago, they began producing an egg with a tough leathery skin to prevent dehydration of its contents on dry land."

How about, how often does a hen lay an egg? "The entire time from ovulation to laying is about 25 hours. Then about 30 minutes later, the hen will begin to make another egg."

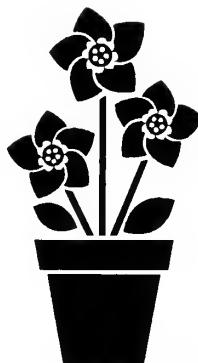
In addition to those tidbits, the *Focus* piece also spells out:

- The government agencies responsible for shell eggs
- The meaning of differing grades of eggs
- How time and refrigeration affect egg quality
- How the appearance of eggs relates to food safety
- The sizing of eggs
- Dating of cartons
- Safety and Easter eggs
- An egg storage chart.

As you can see, it's a "must have" for "egg educators." Go to: [www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/shelleggs.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/shelleggs.htm)

## newsbriefs

### ■ Seasonal Information from the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-800-535-4555



### Seasonal information is sensational!

As news and feature writers know, there's always a demand from consumers for information tied to the different seasons.

Seasonal food safety information is just a click away.

Just log on to  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/  
hotpacks.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/hotpacks.htm)

Seasonal offerings in 1999 included:

#### Winter

- Keeping Food Safe During a Power Outage
- The Big Thaw--Safe Defrosting Methods for Consumers

#### Spring

- Cleanliness Helps Prevent Foodborne illness
- Does Washing Food Promote Food Safety?

#### Summer

- Foodborne Illness Peaks in Summer--Why?
- Food Safety While Hiking, Camping and Boating



#### Fall

- Countdown to the Holiday
- Safe Handling of Complete Meals to Go

So no matter what the season, check out our features. Whether you're a food safety educator or writer, there's bound to be something there for you.

And don't forget to check the Fight BAC!™ web site at [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)

Their "Toolbox" also provides seasonal safety features along with tips for working with the media! ■

### ■ CDC Data Provide Benchmark for Measuring Illness

In September 1999, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the most complete estimate to date on the incidence of foodborne disease in the United States.

CDC now estimates that foodborne diseases cause approximately 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations, and 5,000 deaths in the United States each year.

According to CDC, "Known pathogens account for an estimated 14 million illnesses, 60,000 hospitalizations, and 1,800 deaths. Three pathogens, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and *Toxoplasma*, are responsible for 1,500 deaths each year, more than 75% of those caused by known pathogens, while unknown agents account for the remaining 62 million illnesses, 265,000 hospitalizations, and 3,200 deaths."

"Overall, foodborne diseases appear to cause more illnesses but fewer deaths than previously estimated."

According to CDC, these new estimates come from a variety of sources including new and existing surveillance systems, death certificates and published studies from academic institutions.

CDC Director Dr. Jeffrey Koplan notes these are the most complete estimates ever calculated and should not be compared to previous estimates since the estimates are a result of better information and new analyses rather than changes in disease frequency over time.

However, the current data will be used as a benchmark to measure the effectiveness of food safety initiatives undertaken over the past several years.

To learn more, check out the September/October issue of the *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. Go to: [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol5no5/mead.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol5no5/mead.htm) ■

## newsbriefs

### ■ Checking Your Kitchen's Critical Control Points

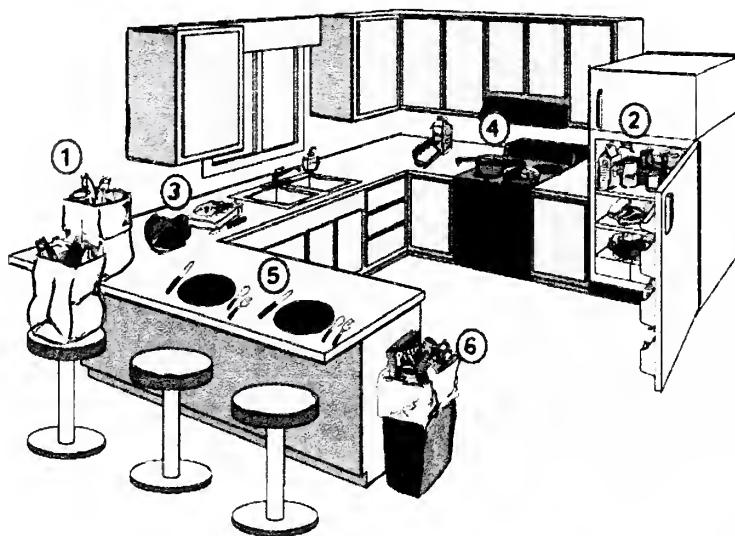
As food safety professionals, most of us are aware of the Critical Control Points concept applied to food production.

Iowa State University's extension office has applied that concept to the kitchen!

Available through their web site, the graphic allows the viewer to click on critical points and learn about key food safety concepts.

Go to:

<http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/families/fs/ccp/ccpkitchen.html> ●



### ■ FDA Information: 1-888-SAFEFOOD

Starting in September 1999, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began offering a new and expanded Outreach and Information Center.

In addition to information on food safety, the Information Center will provide assistance on food additives, dietary supplements and even cosmetics.

A new and expanded toll-free information line will include more than 200 hours of newly recorded information on FDA issues and regulated products.

Information specialists will take calls on the toll-free line between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. business days.

The Center also offers more than 100 documents over fax or through the web. Dial 1-877-FOODFACS. ●

### ■ FDA Consumer Spotlights Food Safety

Two articles in a recent issue of *FDA Consumer* shed light on a leading "bug" and what consumers really do in the kitchen.

"*Campylobacter: Low-Profile Bug Is Food Poisoning Leader*," notes that the most frequently diagnosed foodborne bacterium rarely makes the news. When it comes to food poisoning, the article notes, big outbreaks make headlines, like *E. coli* in apple juice and alfalfa sprouts.

But *Campylobacter* quietly causes up to 4 million human infections each year, according to this article. To find out more--including emerging problems with antibiotic resistance and the link to Guillain-Barre--go to: [http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1999/599\\_bug.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1999/599_bug.html)

"*Keeping Food Safety Surveys Honest*," focuses on a new research technique--using video cameras in consumers' kitchens to see how they really handle food.

Up to 150 people in Logan, Utah, are participating in this FDA pilot study

which used home-based videos to let food safety experts see just how well people practice food safety in their homes.

The cameras film people as they prepare a recipe provided by the research team. The footage will then be evaluated to identify specific food-handling steps. Results are expected in early 2000.

For more information, go to:  
[http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1999/599\\_foodhtml](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1999/599_foodhtml)

Subscription information for *FDA Consumer*--there's a \$12 annual fee and the magazine comes out bimonthly. Subscriptions are handled through the Government Printing Office. Call 202/512-1800. Or check subscription information at the web site:

<http://www.fda.gov/fdac/default.html> ●

## ■ Safe Water? Go To:



<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/ecoli.html>

With one of the nation's largest outbreaks of *E.coli*O157:H7 linked to water contamination during a county fair in upstate New York in 1999, it's important to realize that safety information is available through this valuable web site operated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). ●

## ■ The Food Code: Pocket-Sized!

The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) has shrunk the Food Code! They have produced a 27-page guide, available for \$2 a copy, or \$1.50 a copy for orders of 10 or more. Call AFDO at 717/757-2888. ●

## ■ Assessing Costs

What are the benefits--in economic terms--of recent federal programs to reduce foodborne pathogens?

That question is addressed in a recent issue of *Food Review* (May-August 1999, Vol. 22, Issue 2), published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.

Articles in that issue summarize recent federal food safety initiatives, assess the costs and benefits of pathogen reduction, and update *Salmonella*-related costs using new FoodNet data.

To access the articles, go to:

<http://www.econ.ag.gov/epubs/pdf/foodrevw/may99/> ●

## ■ New ServeSafe for Food Service

The Education Foundation of the National Restaurant Association recently updated training materials for food service workers.

The new training materials are designed to be more attractive and easier to use, appealing to a wider audience including food service employees in grocery stores as well as restaurants.

The training materials include the *ServeSafe Coursebook*, which is available in Spanish and English, an *Instructor's Toolkit*, and a *Food Protection Manager Certification Exam*.

The exam has been updated to conform to the 1999 Food Code and is available in an impressive variety of languages including Spanish, Korean, Mandarin Chinese and Japanese.

For more information, call 800/765-2122 or visit [www.edfound.org](http://www.edfound.org). ●



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## The Calendar Has It All!

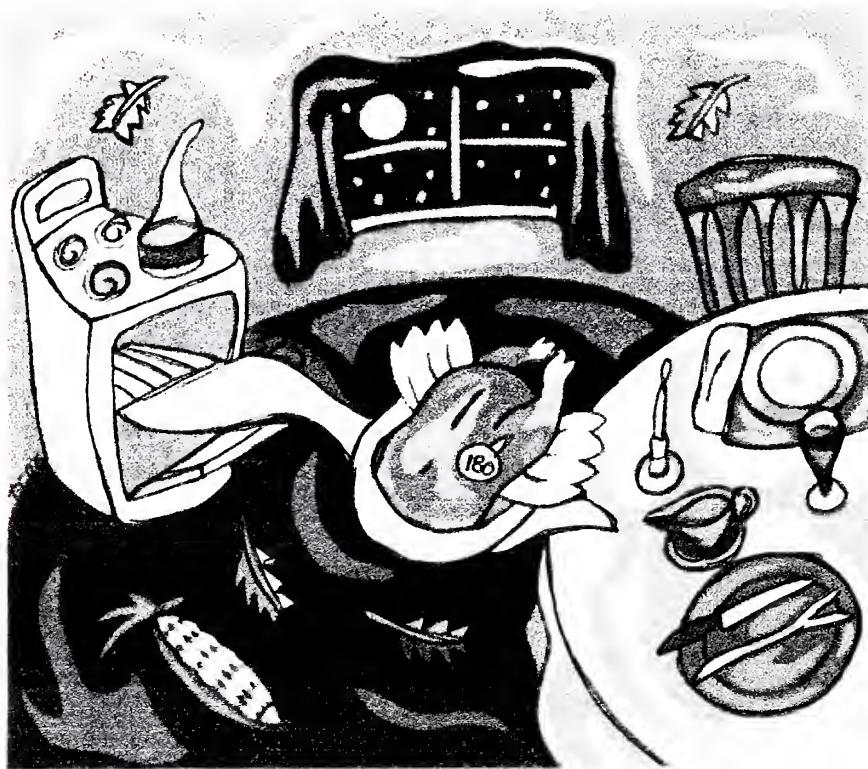
Glorious colors, whimsical original art, food safety tips for every month...

The BAC calendar really does have it all.

USDA's Fight BAC!<sup>tm</sup> Education Liaison Susan Conley encourages all educators to use the calendar to design their year's plans for food safety education.

"You can use the calendar's art on everything from lesson plans to t-shirts. It's a guaranteed show-stopper. You're going to love it--and so will the kids!" Conley said.

For only \$8 plus shipping and handling. Order from the web site: [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org) •



## Coming in 2000: A Food Safety Field Manual

"This guidebook is packed full of ideas and tips for using partnership power to bring Fight BAC!<sup>tm</sup> into communities," said Susan Conley.

**"If you want to do a food safety program, this has got to be your first stop. It's a how-to community-based handbook."**

According to Conley, "the manual takes all the best ideas we've culled from BAC-fighters across the country, as well as two community-based pilot projects conducted this past year.

"We've put everything we learned together in one place. It's a start-to-finish manual on what to do and how to link

with lots of different partners--partners you'd never even have thought of," Conley said.

Non-traditional partners, Conley said, can be one of the keys to successful community-based education programs.

"Education programs depend on individuals who care. Those individuals might work in the local school, or they might work in the local beauty salon or boating marina. You need to cast a wide net," Conley said.

The field manual gives tips on how to find partners, plus how to work with local television and newspapers. The loose-leafbinder also has sample press

releases, feature stories and public service announcements.

The field manual will be distributed free to food safety educators this coming spring to coincide with summer food safety planning.

Or, educators can download the manual from the Fight BAC!<sup>tm</sup> web site.

And educators! Don't forget to add your own ideas and projects to the Fight BAC!<sup>tm</sup> web site. The Scrap Book at the site has pictures of people and projects **underway throughout the country**. Send your photos and projects in! •

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